The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is a public organization serving the counties of and municipalities and townships within Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina (covering an area with 2.1 million people). NOACA is the agency designated or recognized to perform the following functions:

- Serve as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), with responsibility for comprehensive, cooperative and continuous planning for highways, public transit, and bikeways, as defined in the current transportation law.
- Perform continuous water quality, transportation-related air quality and other environmental planning functions.
- Administer the area clearinghouse function, which includes providing local government with the opportunity to review a wide variety of local or state applications for federal funds.
- Conduct transportation and environmental planning and related demographic, economic and land use research.
- Serve as an information center for transportation and environmental and related planning.
- At NOACA Board of Director direction, provide transportation and environmental planning assistance to the 172 units of local, general purpose government.

NOACA’s Board of Directors is composed of 45 local public officials. The Board convenes quarterly to provide a forum for members to present, discuss and develop solutions to local and areawide issues and make recommendations regarding implementation strategies. As the area clearinghouse for the region, the Board makes comments and recommendations on applications for state and federal grants, with the purpose of enhancing the region’s social, physical, environmental and land use/transportation fabric. NOACA invites you to take part in its planning process. Feel free to participate, to ask questions and to learn more about areawide planning.

For more information, call (216) 241-2414 or log on at www.noaca.org
## 2016 NOACA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### BOARD OFFICERS

**President:** Daniel P. Troy  
Commissioner, Lake County  

**First Vice President:** Adam Friedrick  
Commissioner, Medina County  

**Second Vice President:** Armond Budish  
County Executive, Cuyahoga County  

**Secretary:** Valarie J. McCall  
Chief of Government & International Affairs, City of Cleveland  

**Assistant Secretary:** Michael P. Summers  
Mayor, City of Lakewood

**Assistant Secretary:** Richard Heidecker  
Columbia Township Trustee, Lorain County  

**Treasurer:** Blake Rear  
Commissioner, Geauga County  

**Assistant Treasurer:** Julius Ciaccia, Jr.  
Executive Director, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District  

**Assistant Treasurer:** Susan Infeld  
Mayor, City of University Heights  

**Immediate Past President:** Ted Kalo  
Commissioner, Lorain County

### BOARD MEMBERS

#### CUYAHOGA COUNTY (fifteen members)
- Samuel J. Alai  
  Mayor, City of Broadview Heights  

- Tanisha R. Briley  
  City Manager, Cleveland Heights  

- Armond Budish  
  County Executive  

- Scott E. Coleman  
  Mayor, City of Highland Heights  

- Glenn Coyne  
  Executive Director, Planning Commission  

- Anthony T. Hairston  
  County Councilman  

- Kirsten Holzheimer Gail  
  Mayor, City of Euclid  

- Susan K. Infeld  
  Mayor, City of University Heights  

- Charles E. Smith  
  Mayor, Village of Woodmere  

- Robert A. Stefaniak  
  Mayor, City of North Royalton  

- Michael P. Summers  
  Mayor, City of Lakewood  

- Vacant

#### CITY OF CLEVELAND (six members)
- Freddy L. Collier, Jr.  
  Director, City Planning Commission  

#### GEAUGA COUNTY (three members)
- Walter "Skip" Claypool  
  County Commissioner  

- Blake A. Rear  
  County Commissioner  

- Ralph Spidalieri  
  County Commissioner  

#### LAKE COUNTY (five members)
- James R. Gills, P.E., P.S.  
  County Engineer  

- Raymond Jurkowski  
  General Manager, Laketran  

- Kevin Malecek  
  County Commissioner  

- Judy Moran  
  County Commissioner  

- Daniel P. Troy  
  County Commissioner  

#### LORAIN COUNTY (seven members)
- Holly Brinda  
  Mayor, City of Elyria  

- Kenneth P. Carney, Sr., P.E., P.S.  
  County Engineer

#### REGIONAL AND STATE (five members)
- Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA)  
  Joseph A. Calabrese, CEO and General Manager  

- Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS)  
  Julius Ciaccia, Jr., Executive Director  

- Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority  
  William D. Friedman, President/CEO  

- Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)  
  Myron S. Pakush, Deputy Director, District 12  

- Ex officio Member:  
  Kurt Princic, Chief, Northeast District Office, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)

### NOACA DIRECTORS

- Randy Lane  
  Director of Programming  

- Susanna Merione, EMBA  
  Senior Director of Financial Planning & Performance Management  

- Kathy Sarli  
  Director of Planning  

- Mark Zannoni  
  Director of Research, Analysis & Policy  

- William Davis  
  Associate Director of Operations Management  

- Jonathan Giblin  
  Associate Director of Compliance

- Grace Gallucci  
  Executive Director  

- Marvin Hayes  
  Director of Communications & Public Affairs  

- Cheryl A. Kurkowski, CPA  
  Director of Finance & Operations
About NOACA
The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties and the City of Cleveland. NOACA performs planning for highways, bridges, public transit, bikeways and pedestrian facilities. The agency also conducts transportation-related air quality planning and functions as the areawide water quality planning agency. NOACA’s 45-member Board of Directors, consisting of elected and appointed public officials from the five-county region, determines how federal transportation dollars are spent in Northeast Ohio. The agency works closely with local communities, county engineers, transit agencies, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and other stakeholders on project planning, development and funding in a public forum. The agency takes a broad and balanced view of the region’s multimodal transportation system and seeks to preserve and improve the system throughout the entire metropolitan area.

NOACA Vision Statement
Through its vision statement, NOACA will STRENGTHEN regional cohesion, PRESERVE existing infrastructure, and BUILD a sustainable multimodal transportation system to SUPPORT economic development and ENHANCE quality of life in Northeast Ohio.

A key strategy identified to support the fulfillment of NOACA’s vision statement is to further develop and leverage strong relationships with community, economic development and business partners. NOACA accomplishes this in accordance with federal regulations through such methods as:

- Providing information and education
- Using visualization techniques
- Giving timely public notice
- Using a variety of in-person and online opportunities to participate
- Enabling public access to key decisions
- Considering significant comments on its planning documents

Public Interaction Policy & Public Participation Plan
The Public Interaction Policy (last adopted December 11, 2015; see Appendix A) outlines how NOACA will inform and educate stakeholders and the public about the agency’s work, programs and products; facilitate participation; gather feedback; and encourage consensus on the expenditure of public funds. The policy requires the development of an annual Public Participation Plan to engage stakeholders and other interested parties in the metropolitan transportation planning process.
NOACA will develop a specific Public Participation/Communications Plan for each of its major planning products. This applies especially to the three key documents NOACA is required to produce, according to federal mandate:

1. **The Long-Range Transportation Plan**, which outlines the transportation goals, investments and programs for the region with a 20-year planning horizon. Major updates occur every four years.

2. **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**, which brings the vision of the long-range transportation plan to life. The TIP includes all federally funded and regionally significant, non-federally funded highway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian and freight-related projects scheduled for the next four years in NOACA’s five counties. In Ohio, the TIP is updated every two years and may be amended quarterly.

3. **Overall Work Program (OWP)**, which outlines the transportation and environmental work of NOACA staff during the fiscal year running from July 1 through June 30. The OWP includes NOACA’s transportation, air quality and water quality planning projects, as well as special programs, studies, local assistance, and program administration. The OWP is updated yearly.

NOACA’s public participation process for the TIP satisfies the public participation process for the Program of Projects of the transit systems within its region (Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, Laketran, Lorain County Transit, Medina County Transit, Brunswick Transit Alternative, and Geauga County Transit). NOACA’s public notice of public participation activities and the time established for public review of and comments on the TIP will also satisfy the transit agencies’ Program of Projects requirements.

**Public Participation Goals**

NOACA is committed to informing and educating the public about its planning work, as well as providing opportunities for members of the public—including those in Environmental Justice and Low English Proficiency communities—to be involved in and participate in developing and implementing that work. To do that, NOACA will:

- Provide timely information about planning issues and processes to the public.
- Foster transparency by providing reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of transportation plans.
- Provide adequate notice of public involvement and planning activities.
- Continually seek specific ways to engage and consider the needs of all segments of the population.
- Obtain early and continuous public involvement in the transportation planning process.
Public Participation Tools and Techniques: A “Tools in the Toolbox” Approach

NOACA uses a variety of strategies, techniques and tools to engage the public based upon the audience (the particular segment of the public the agency wishes to reach) and the purpose of the communication (e.g., education, opinion seeking, etc.). NOACA and its staff may choose a variety of techniques and tools from the “toolbox” and will adjust communications techniques based on each specific scenario. This list may be revised based on the availability of new tools and/or technologies.

The techniques and tools that may be used are listed below, divided into three general categories:

A. **Public Information**: Disseminating information
B. **Public Outreach**: Increasing awareness of the agency and its activities among those who may be unfamiliar with its services and planning responsibilities
C. **Public Involvement**: NOACA’s activities to involve the public in planning activities, gather comments and ideas, and provide the means to keep people active and interested

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique / Tool and Description</th>
<th>A Public Info</th>
<th>B Public Outreach</th>
<th>C Public Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOACA Website</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides current information, reports, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Permits users to leave comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Includes a calendar of Board of Directors and committee meetings, public outreach activities and special events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Features a language translation tool</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides maps, graphs and other visual tools to convey NOACA’s projects and activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides interactive geographic information system (GIS) tools to share transportation system condition data and other information</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media</strong> (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides current information and breaking news about NOACA plans, projects, events, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email Messages</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be targeted to specific audiences in NOACA’s contact and/or outreach database or in email marketing programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Memos, Reports, Planning Documents</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafts to comment on, final versions on website for info</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique / Tool and Description</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Notices and Advertisements</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g., to announce documents for review; invitation to open house, public meetings, or focus groups; etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Press Releases and Media Advisories</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To advise print and broadcast media of meetings and actions of the Board of Directors and committees, agency news, programs, opportunities for public comment, etc., for broader dissemination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Service Announcements</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To advise broadcast media of free services, opportunities for public comment, open houses, etc., for broader dissemination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flyers, Posters, Infographics, etc.</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To publicize meetings, open houses, focus groups, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sent to planning partners (libraries, ODOT, etc.) to post</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publications and E-Publications</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Annual Report</strong>: Highlights annual accomplishment &amp; status of planning efforts; distributed at NOACA’s Annual Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>NOACA E-Newsletter (“NOACA Connection”)</strong>: Highlights recent reports, studies, maps, graphs and other information, including Board agendas and schedules with links pointing to the NOACA website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collateral Materials (Brochures, Handouts, Postcards etc.)</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Targeted by audience (e.g., project sponsors, public, Environmental Justice populations, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To explain NOACA’s purpose, work, services, programs, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articles, Opinion Pieces, etc.</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOACA may develop articles for the newsletters of partner organizations and/or trade publication, op/ed pieces, letters to the editor, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique / Tool and Description</td>
<td>A Public Info</td>
<td>B Public Outreach</td>
<td>C Public Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speakers Bureau, Speeches, Presentations, etc.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Targeted by audience (e.g., public officials, project sponsors, public, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To explain NOACA’s work, policies, services, programs, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Often use photos, video, maps, charts, graphs and other visualization techniques</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conferences, Workshops and Special Events</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can be sponsored by NOACA or partner (e.g., planning agencies, transportation operators, county engineers, professional organizations)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity to meet the public and distribute information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Meetings and Open Houses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can be sponsored by NOACA or partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NOACA-sponsored events are typically to view draft plans, policies, etc.; discuss projects and issues; elicit comments</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online and/or Webinar Interaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can be sponsored by NOACA or partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NOACA-sponsored events are typically to view draft plans, policies, etc.; discuss projects and issues; elicit comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board of Directors and Committee Meetings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offer opportunities for public comment on agenda items</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Meeting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regional forum typically held in the fall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Features speakers on transportation, economic development, and environmental issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Often features banners, display tables, mapping, PowerPoint presentations, photos, videos and other visualization techniques</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NOACA invites the public to attend, participate, offer comments and pose questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Comment Hotline</strong> (216-241-2414, ext. 303)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used to gather comments on major planning documents, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public Participation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique / Tool and Description</th>
<th>A Public Info</th>
<th>B Public Outreach</th>
<th>C Public Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can be print, online or by telephone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Used to gather opinions to aid in planning work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups and Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To gather public input on specific topics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-in Sheets</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used to document attendance at events &amp; for follow-up (e.g., future correspondence)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment Forms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used to gather comments on major planning documents from attendees of public meetings and open houses, those who review documents at the library or online, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business, Community and Rural Advisory Councils</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as conduits of information to and from the business/industry sector, community organizations, rural entities, Environmental Justice populations and the general public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Force/Committee Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As opportunities arise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships with Other Organizations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NOACA works with and through other organizations to disseminate information and encourage participation of the organizations’ membership or clientele</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Examples include public libraries, health &amp; human services agencies, departments on aging, etc.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tools and Techniques to be Used for Major Plans

For the three major planning documents referred to earlier and other major planning documents (e.g., Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Northeast Ohio, Regional Bicycle Plan), NOACA will develop a specific participation/communications plan (either formally or informally) that details its efforts to inform and educate the public, encourage public participation, and invite public comments.
Public Participation Plan

At a minimum, each participation/communications plan will include the following elements:

- Have a minimum public involvement/review period of 30 days (45 days for the Public Participation Plan).
- Make copies of the major document(s) available at NOACA and/or on NOACA’s website.
- Send links to the online document(s) in NOACA’s e-newsletter, NOACA Connection.
- Send out a press release to the major print publications, and radio and TV stations.
- Include a message on the hotline requesting comments on the plan(s).
- Hold at least one public meeting and/or open house so the public can view the documents, ask questions and offer comments. In most cases additional public meetings will be necessary to engage the public fully in the process.
- Hold at least one online or webinar opportunity for public involvement.
- Use visualization techniques to enhance public understanding and encourage public participation (e.g., maps, photos, graphics, etc.).

Project Planning Review Process
In addition to the three (3) federally mandated documents NOACA is required to produce (listed above), NOACA’s staff spends considerable time involving the public through its Project Planning Review (PPR) process.

A project or program that is added to the Long-Range Transportation Plan or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) must be processed through NOACA’s PPR process. PPR includes staff, public, intergovernmental and committee review; and allows comment from the beginning of the process until the NOACA Board of Directors votes on whether to add that project or program.

To aid in the PPR process, NOACA has created an interactive, web-based portal that provides searchable access to project details and funding status of transportation projects. The “Interactive TIP Tool” makes project data available through mapping and printed reports. The portal also allows comment on new project funding applications being considered by NOACA.
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Appendix A

NOACA Public Interaction Policy

Policy Statement
Public participation is a communication and public affairs activity defined in the yearly OWP. The goal of these activities is to engage and inform NOACA stakeholders, interested parties and the general public on the development of policies and programs and prospectively the expenditure of public dollars for transportation system and environmental management planning activities.

Authority
United States Code, Title 23 CFR Part 450 – FHWA Policy
United States Code, 49 CFR Part 613 - FTA Policy

Purpose
The Public Interaction Policy is the set of principles that are the foundation and guidance document for the annual NOACA Public Participation Plan.

Criteria
The use of the Public Interaction Policy is to ensure that NOACA fulfills its responsibilities to inform, engage, and educate stakeholders regarding the work of the Agency and the general public. In accordance with federal law MPOs are responsible for facilitating interaction with stakeholders and the public not only to provide information but also to facilitate dialogue, record input received and incorporate the thoughts and concerns of the public into the development of major MPO planning documents and in various aspects of the MPO planning process.

Principles of NOACA Public Interaction Policy

Produce an Annual Public Participation Plan
NOACA will produce a public participation plan annually which will highlight public interaction opportunities for the upcoming year, including schedules for the production of major documents and the development of plans and projects as they regularly occur on a year to year basis. The plan shall be developed in consultation with interested parties and will describe how it will achieve specific outcomes.

Proactive Dissemination of Information
NOACA will proactively provide information regarding the development major documents to interested parties, stakeholders and the general public in sufficient time such that a reasonable
opportunity to consider information and provide feedback, which can then be incorporated to the production of the document(s).

**Timely Provision of Information to Facilitate Engagement**
As part of the NOACA Public Participation Program, NOACA will maintain and update a schedule of major documents and planning processes, such that interested parties will have ample time to plan their participation.

**Accessibility of Information Through Electronic Communications**
NOACA maintains and continually updates an Agency website and will use social media and other electronic media sources to make information available on the development of major documents and planning processes, to which the public may want to provide input.

**Public Meetings**
NOACA will convene public meetings at convenient times and locations to make these events reasonably accessible to parties potentially interested in the Agency’s work.

**Consideration of Public Input**
NOACA will include opportunities to receive public input and specifically include time and procedures to incorporate public input into the process of major document production and planning processes.

**Representation of Underserved Communities**
NOACA will address the concerns of underserved communities according to the Agency’s Environmental Justice Policy as relates to inclusion of low income, minority and other under-represented populations in public participation activities.

**Inclusion of Public Comments**
NOACA public participation plans will ensure that the process for receiving input and inclusion of comments in the development of major documents and planning activities is inclusive of the final draft or version prior to final publication.

**Coordination with State Planning Process**
NOACA public participation planning schedules will include statewide public involvement planning activities.

**Regularly Update Public Participation Plans**
NOACA will publish a new public participation plan each year to update the planned activities of the Agency in regard to public interactions.
Public Comment Period for Public Participation Plan
NOACA will adhere to a scheduled 45-day comment period before publishing a final version of the Agency’s annual Public Participation Plan.
Appendix B

Federal Regulations on Public Involvement
(from Federal Rules for Metropolitan Transportation Planning)

United States Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration – 23 CFR Parts 450 And 500
Federal Transit Administration – 49 CFR Part 613
Statewide Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning
FINAL RULE
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§ 450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation.

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;

(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;

(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and

(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition,
metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

(1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;

(2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and

(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.

(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under §450.314.
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Additional Nondiscrimination Requirements

Overview

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits discrimination based upon race, color, and national origin. Specifically, 42 USC 2000d states that “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” The use of the word “person” is important as the protections afforded under Title VI apply to anyone, regardless of whether the individual is lawfully present in the United States or a citizen of a State within the United States. In addition to Title VI, there are other Nondiscrimination statutes that afford legal protection. These statutes include the following: Section 162 (a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (23 USC 324) (sex), Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (age), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (disability). Taken together, these requirements define an overarching Title VI/Nondiscrimination Program. It is important to also understand that Title VI and the additional Nondiscrimination requirements are applicable to Federal programs in addition to programs receiving federal financial assistance due to the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987.

Excerpt from:
Guidance and Best Practices for Incorporating Environmental Justice into Ohio Transportation and Environmental Processes, Ohio Department of Transportation, August 2002.

A. Definition of Environmental Justice

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Environmental Justice (EJ) defines EJ as:

“The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socio-economic group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local and tribal programs and policies.”
EJ applies to all programs and activities of federal-aid recipients, whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not. This means that any agency that receives federal funds must:

- Make a meaningful effort to involve low-income and minority populations in the processes established to make decisions regarding its programs and activities, and
- Evaluate the nature, extent, and incidence of probable and adverse human health or environmental impacts of its programs and activities upon minority or low-income populations.

B. What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental Justice is not a new concern. The principles it embodies are rooted in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and previous civil rights legislation. Today, because of the evolution of the transportation planning process, EJ is simply a matter of increased awareness of the effects and impacts of transportation decisions on the human environment. There are three fundamental EJ principles:

- To avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

C. Why Do ODOT and MPOs Need to Address Environmental Justice?

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Ohio’s Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) receive federal funding to support many of their programs and activities. Therefore, both ODOT and Ohio’s MPOs must address the federal EJ requirements as a condition to receive those funds. Local governments, serving as Local Public Agency (LPA) project coordinators must also comply.

Environmental Justice Requirements are not new. On February 11, 1994, President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations. The need to consider Environmental Justice, however, was already embodied in many laws, regulations and policies such as Title VI of the...
Civil Rights Act of 1964 as previously mentioned, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Title 23 of the United States Code (USC) Section 109 (h), and the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisitions Policy Act of 1970, long before Executive Order 12898. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act states that, “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Title VI prohibits intentional discrimination as well as disparate impact discrimination (i.e., a neutral policy or practice that has a disparate impact on low-income and minority groups).

The 1994 Environmental Justice (EJ) Executive Order amplifies Title VI by providing that “each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies and activities on minority and low-income populations.”

Increasingly, concerns for compliance with the provisions of Title VI and the EJ orders have been raised by citizens and advocacy groups with regard to broad patterns of transportation investments and impacts considered in metropolitan and statewide planning. While Title VI and EJ concerns have most often been raised during project development, it is important to recognize that the law also applies equally to the processes and products of planning and environmental analysis. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are to ensure compliance with Title VI in the planning process during their planning certification reviews conducted for Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) and through the statewide planning finding rendered at approval of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

D. NOACA Environmental Justice Planning Outreach and Feedback

NOACA is committed to making specific and consistent efforts to connect with and communicate to communities in the NOACA region that are traditionally underrepresented in public engagement activities. In addition to the “tools in the toolbox” approach outlined above, the following activities are targeted specifically to EJ populations.

Continue the work of the Community Advisory Council

The NOACA Board created the Community Advisory Council to serve as a conduit of information and a source of guidance in communicating with underserved and underrepresented communities. NOACA will use this Council for advice and guidance in performing outreach activities in Environmental Justice areas of the region.
Identify local stakeholders
NOACA will commit to identifying specific stakeholders who are representative of the specifically defined Environmental Justice areas in the Northeast Ohio region. Staff will consistently and intentionally seek to involve these stakeholders to communicate with and seek feedback on NOACA’s major published documents. This will be done in a manner consistent with the general principles of public engagement listed earlier in this document.

Conduct meetings in specifically identified Environmental Justice areas of the region
Given the geographically specific location of citizens classified by the term Environmental Justice area, NOACA will host meetings in areas representative of traditionally underrepresented citizens.

Post information on NOACA’s non-discrimination policy
Statements explaining NOACA’s non-discrimination policy remain publicly available on the NOACA website at the following link: http://noaca.org/index.aspx?page=3362

Define Environmental Justice areas
NOACA will create a methodology that defines Environmental Justice areas that will be used to guide plans to perform outreach activities.

Document Environmental Justice activities
NOACA will document its outreach efforts to Environmental Justice communities and Low English Proficiency communities at the end of each calendar year.